Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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NODIS
CHEROKEE EYES ONLY FOR BRZEZINSKI

FOL RPT CAIRO 22603 SENT ACTION TEL AVIV DTD 22 DEC 77

QUOTE: S E C R E T CAIRO 22603

EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

CHEROKEE -FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, EG, US, IS
SUBJECT: SADAT ON WEIZMAN/GAMASY MEETING

SUMMARY: SADAT DISPIRITED AFTER WEIZMAN VISIT. SAYS ISRAELIS STILL THINKING IN OLD CONCEPTUAL TERMS AND HAVE NOT UNDERSTOOD NEW SITUATION FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO JERUSALEM. WEIZMAN ASKED FOR TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS IN SINAI AND FOR RETENTION OF SETTLEMENTS, WHICH SADAT REFUSED. SADAT ACCEPTED ISRAEL'S NEED FOR SECURITY, BUT INSISTED THIS NOT BE AT EXPENSE EGYPTIAN LAND. OTHER SECURITY GUARANTEES COULD BE DEVISED. WEIZMAN PROFESSED
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UNDERSTAND SITUATION, BUT THOUGHT BEGIN WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY WITH IT. SADAT DID AGREE TO SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS ON "NATURE OF PEACE" (PARA 3), BUT ONLY AS PART OF "PACKAGE" SETTLEMENT, INCLUDING WITHDRAWAL TO INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY IN SINAI. SADAT SAYS IF BEGIN TRIES TO OBTAIN TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS FROM HIM AS "MODEL" FOR OTHER ARAB STATES, PRIMIN WILL BE MAKING GREAT MISTAKE. HE HAS ALREADY GONE AS FAR AS HE CAN GO. IF TALKS FAIL, HE WILL DECLARE REASONS TO EGYPTIAN PEOPLE AND IS PREPARED FACE CONSEQUENCES. END SUMMARY.

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1. TOOK OKLAHOMA STATE SENATOR GENE HOWARD AND OKLAHOMA BUSINESSMAN HARRY GUTTERMAN TO MEET WITH SADAT TODAY IN ISMAILIA. I FOUND SADAT RATHER DISPIRITED. HE WAS FASTING, WHICH ALWAYS TIRES HIM, BUT HIS TALKS WITH WEIZMAN WERE CLEARLY ALSO AN ELEMENT IN HIS DISCOURAGED ATTITUDE.
2. IN COURSE OF TALK WITH THE TWO OKLAHOMANS, HE COMMENTED RATHER SADLY THAT THE WEIZMAN VISIT HAD SHOWN THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE NOT REALLY ALTERED THEIR CONCEPTS. DESPITE HIS VISIT TO JERUSALEM, WHICH HAD BROKEN DOWN PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS, THEY ARE STILL THINKING OF SECURITY IN TRADI-TIONAL TERMS OF RETENTION OF EGYPTIAN TERRITORY. HE HAD AGREED WITH WEIZMAN ON NEED TO ASSURE ISRAELI SECURITY, BUT HAD EMPHASIZED THAT THIS CANNOT BE AT EXPENSE OF EGYPTIAN TERRITORY. HE HAD TOLD WEIZMAN THAT IF ISRAELIS INSIST UPON RETAINING MILITARY PRESENCE IN SINAI, THEY MUST LOGICALLY ALSO HOLD WEST BANK OF CANAL WHERE EGYPTIAN MISSILES ARE DEPLOYED. HIS VISIT TO JERUSALEM HAD TAKEN THE ISRAELIS BY SURPRISE, SADAT SAID RATHER SOMBERLY, AND THEY SEEM UNABLE TO ADJUST TO THE NEW SITUATION. IT WILL BE UNFORTUNATE IF THERE IS NO CHANGE IN ISRAELI THINKING. WE ARE IN A NEW ERA WITH NEW FACTS IN WHICH HARD DECISIONS MUST BE MADE AND RISKS TAKEN. THE ISRAELI
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GOVT, HE REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES, DOES NOT SEEM TO BE READY FOR THIS. AFTER HOWARD/GUTTERMAN HAD LEFT THE ROOM, SADAT ASKED ME TO STAY BEHIND IN ORDER TO BRIEF ME ON WEIZMAN/GAMASY TALKS. HE WANTED PRESIDENT CARTER AND YOU TO KNOW ABOUT THEM.

3. AS WE KNEW, HE HAD TWICE MET WITH WEIZMAN AND GAMASY. ON FIRST OCCASION, HE HAD SOUGHT TO BRIEF BOTH OF THEM ON THE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THAT HIS JERUSALEM VISIT HAS CHANGED THE SITUATION AND THAT NEW, IMAGINATIVE PEACE PERCEPTIONS ARE NOW NEEDED. WHILE INDICATING PERSONAL UNDERSTANDING OF EGYPTIAN NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND ATTACHMENT TO THEIR LAND, WEIZMAN HAD NEVERTHELESS STATED THAT ISRAELI PUBLIC REQUIRES CERTAIN SECURITY ASSURANCES INVOLVING A CONTINU-ING ISRAELI PRESENCE IN SINAI. SPECIFICALLY:

(A) AIRFIELDS IN SINAI: WHILE ISRAEL AGREED TO EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER SINAI, WEIZMAN HAD INDICATED IT WISHES TO LEASE AND UTILIZE TWO AIR BASES IN SINAI-- ONE AT RAS AL NAQB NEAR EILAT AND THE OTHER AT SHEIKH SUWAIYID NEAR RAFAH. WEIZMAN HAD CALLED THESE AIRFIELDS ESSENTIAL, NOTING ISRAEL HAS OVER ONE HUNDRED AIRCRAFT AT EACH OF THEM. SADAT SAID HE HAD ABSOLUTELY REFUSED THIS. IF THE TWO AIRFIELDS ARE OF SUCH IMPORTANCE, AND ISRAEL IS CONCERNED THAT EGYPT MIGHT USE THEM, SADAT HAD SUGGESTED THAT THEY BE "PLOWED UP" SO THEY WOULD BE UNUSABLE. WEIZMAN HAD THEN SUGGESTED THAT THE BORDER

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AREAS BE REDEMARCATED SO THAT THESE TWO AIRFIELDS COULD COME WITHIN ISRAELI TERRITORY. ISRAEL WOULD COMPENSATE EGYPT WITH SOME TERRITORY. SADAT SAID HE HAD ALSO REFUSED THIS.

- (B) WEIZMAN HAD THEN SUGGESTED A COMBINED ISRAELI/ EGYPTIAN MILITARY FORCE IN SINAI. SADAT HAD REFUSED.

- (C) SETTLEMENTS: WEIZMAN HAD ASKED ABOUT RETAINING
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ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN NORTHERN SINAI. THIS, TOO, SADAT HAD REFUSED. WEIZMAN HAD NOTED THAT SADAT'S REFUSAL TO ALLOW THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS TO REMAIN IN SINAI WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR BEGIN. SADAT SAID HE RESPONDED THAT BEGIN MUST UNDERSTAND THE RETENTION OF THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IS UNACCEPTABLE AND INCONSISTENT WITH WHAT SHOULD BE A NEW CONCEPTION OF PEACE.

- (D) JOINT EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI COMMISSION: WEIZMAN HAD ALSO ASKED ABOUT SETTING UP A NEW JOINT EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI COMMISSION WITHOUT REPEAT WITHOUT THE U.N. THIS JOINT COMMISSION COULD HANDLE BORDER PROBLEMS. SADAT SAID HE AGREED TO THIS SUGGESTION. SADAT HAD ADDED THAT A "CORRIDOR" COULD BE ARRANGED THROUGH THE SINAI SO THAT ISRAELI CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISTS CAN UTILIZE THE AIRFIELDS AND VISIT SHARM EL SHEIKH OR OTHER PLACES IN SINAI.

- (E) COMPENSATION: AT ONE POINT SADAT NOTED HE HAD TOLD WEIZMAN, "YOU HAVE LOTS TO PAY ME" AND MENTIONED TO ME THAT HE PLANS TO MAKE A SIZABLE CLAIM FOR COMPENSATION. HE DID NOT ELABORATE.

- (F) SECURITY: WEIZMAN HAD CONTINUED TO INSIST ON THE NEED FOR SOME SORT OF AN ISRAELI MILITARY PRESENCE IN SINAI. SADAT COMMENTED THAT WEIZMAN IS SERIOUS AND HONEST, BUT REGRETTABLY THE ISRAELIS DO NOT APPEAR TO UNDERSTAND THE NEW SITUATION. HE HAD TOLD WEIZMAN THAT SECURITY IS NOT A MATTER OF SOME KILOMETERS OF LAND, BUT OF INTENTIONS. HE HAD ADVISED WEIZMAN THAT IF ISRAEL WINS THE SUPPORT OF THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE, IT NEED HAVE NO FEAR ABOUT SECURITY NOW OR IN THE FUTURE. HE HAD ALSO STRESSED, AS HE HAD AGREED WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, TO
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PROVIDE THE ISRAELIS WITH ANY ASSURANCES THEY MAY REQUIRE, SUCH AS EARLY WARNING STATIONS. BUT HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO GIVE CONCESSIONS IN THE FORM OF TERRITORIAL CESSIONS OR LEASEHOLDS. HE HAD WARNED WEIZMAN THAT IF BEGIN THINKS

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HE IS GOING TO OBTAIN CONCESSIONS FROM HIM AS A "MODEL"
FOR THE OTHER ARABS, THE PRIME MINISTER IS QUITE WRONG.
BEGIN WILL BE COMMITTING A GREAT ERROR IF HE TRIES THIS.
SADAT INSISTED THAT HE IS NOT PREPARED TO GIVE ANY
FURTHER CONCESSIONS. HE HAD ALREADY DONE FAR MORE THAN
THE ISRAELIS.

- (G) NATURE OF PEACE: IN SUPPORT OF HIS POINT, HE
AGAIN RECALLED HIS VISIT TO JERUSALEM, WHICH HAD BROKEN
DOWN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS AND CREATED A TOTALLY
NEW SITUATION. MORE THAN THAT, HOWEVER, HE HAD TOLD
WEIZMAN THAT IMMEDIATELY AFTER A PEACE TREATY IS SIGNED,
GOE IS PREPARED TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN
THE TWO COUNTRIES, THE BORDERS WILL BE OPENED,
TOURISTS CAN MOVE BACK AND FORTH, AND TRADE CAN TAKE
PLACE. HOWEVER, ALL THESE CONCESSIONS MUST BE PART OF
A "PACKAGE DEAL," INCLUDING WITHDRAWAL TO THE INTER-
NATIONAL BOUNDARY.

- (H) GULF OF AQABA: ASKED IF SHARM EL SHEIKH HAD
COME UP, SADAT REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE. WEIZMAN HAD
INDICATED THAT, FOLLOWING EGYPTIAN CLOSURE OF BAB AL-
MANDAB DURING OCTOBER 73 WAR, STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF
GULF OF AQABA HAS DIMINISHED. THEY HAD AGREED, HOWEVER,
TO INCLUDE IN THE PEACE TREATY A SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO
THE FACT THAT THE GULF OF AQABA IS AN INTERNATIONAL
WATERWAY AND THIS COULD BE FORMALLY ENDORSED BY THE U.N.
SECURITY COUNCIL. SHOULD THIS STILL NOT BE ENOUGH
FOR THE ISRAELIS, HE HAD AGREED TO A UNEF PRESENCE IN
SHARM EL SHEIKH, BUT WITHOUT ISRAELI TROOPS.

4. WEIZMAN, WHEN LEAVING, HAD STATED THAT HE IS WORRIED
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HOW BEGIN WILL REACT TO THE EGYPTIAN POSITION. SADAT
SAID HE HAD RESPONDED BY EMPHASIZING THAT HE WANTS TO

NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY, BUT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE "NEW
SITUATION." HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO MAKE CONCESSIONS
OF THE TYPE SOUGHT BY WEIZMAN AND BEGIN SHOULD BE UNDER
NO ILLUSION THAT HE WILL GET SUCH CONCESSIONS. IF NOTHING
COMES OF HIS TALKS WITH BEGIN ON SUNDAY, SADAT HAD TOLD
WEIZMAN, HE WILL DECLARE EVERYTHING TO THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE.
THEY MUST KNOW THE FACTS. IF CONTINUED ISRAELI ADHERENCE
TO OLD-FASHIONED SECURITY CONCEPTS PROVES THAT HIS
JERUSALEM TRIP WAS A MISTAKE, HE WILL FRANKLY SAY SO.
IT MAY MEAN THAT HE WILL HAVE TO LEAVE OFFICE, BUT THIS
IS A RISK HE IS PREPARED TO TAKE. HE HAD TOLD WEIZMAN
THAT IN ANY CASE, HE WANTS TO LEAVE OFFICE BY 1980,
I.E., TWO YEARS BEFORE THE END OF HIS TERM.
5. SADAT ASKED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER BE ADVISED THAT
WHEN HE MEETS WITH BEGIN, HE INTENDS TO GIVE THE ISRAELI

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PRIME MINISTER EVERY POSSIBILITY OF TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE NEW SITUATION. IF BEGIN FAILS TO DO SO, "IT WILL BE A SERIOUS SETBACK," BUT ISRAEL RATHER THAN EGYPT WILL BE THE LOSER. IT WILL SHOW THAT HIS GESTURE IN VISITING JERUSALEM AND CALLING THE CAIRO CONFERENCE HAS BEEN ILL-REQUITED. ALTHOUGH HE HAD FEW MINUTES EARLIER SPOKEN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING TO LEAVE OFFICE IF THAT HAPPENS, SADAT THEN MENTIONED THAT PERHAPS ISRAEL COULD SOMEHOW BE GIVEN ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY.

6. COMMENT: AS ABOVE INDICATES, DESPITE UPBEAT PRESS COMMENTARY (CAIRO 22584), WEIZMAN'S REQUESTS--ESPECIALLY FOR A CONTINUED ISRAELI PRESENCE IN SINAI--HAVE WORRIED
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SADAT. HE IS CONCERNED THAT BEGIN WILL REPEAT THEM AND HOPES HIS FIRM REFUSAL TO WEIZMAN WILL MAKE BEGIN THINK TWICE ABOUT DOING SO. HE BELIEVES HE HAS MADE MAJOR CONCESSIONS AND THAT IT IS NOW BEGIN'S TURN TO RESPOND IN KIND. HE IS CLUTCHING TO OUR ESTIMATE THAT BEGIN STILL HAS AN OPEN MIND AND WANTS TO HEAR SADAT'S VIEWS, BUT HIS PERENNIAL OPTIMISM HAS OBVIOUSLY BEEN JARRED BY WHAT HE HEARD. NOR HAS THE SPATE OF PRESS REPORTS ABOUT THE BEGIN PLAN BEEN REASSURING.

7. AS I WAS LEAVING, SADAT SAID THAT HE INTENDS TO RETURN TO CAIRO IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS TALKS WITH BEGIN. HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH ME SOON AS HE GOT BACK TO CAIRO IN ORDER TO PROVIDE PRESIDENT CARTER AND YOU WITH A BRIEFING ON THE TALKS. IN THE MEANTIME, IF PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ANY FURTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT HOW USG MIGHT ASSIST IN RESOLVING ISRAELI SECURITY CONCERNS, HE WOULD WELCOME HAVING THEM. EILTS UNQUOTE VANCE

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